



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A SPANIARD'S REVENGE

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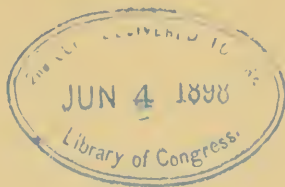
THE DEATH OF RICARDO RUIZ.

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A SPANIARD'S REVENGE

OR

THE DEATH OF RICARDO RUIZ.



BY DAZIE NOEL.



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1898

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CHARACTERS,

RICARDO RUIZ A Cuban Patriot,
EULATE FONDESVEILA, A Spanish Officer,
VICTORIAN LESLIE An American,
PATRICK O'FALLLEN. A Nervous Irishman,
RITA, Wife of Ricardo
MERCEDES, Sister of Rita,
BIDDY O GRADY An Irish Girl
EVANGELINA. } Children of Ricardo.
RICARDITO }

TIME, The present

PLACE, Guanabacoa, Cuba

TIME OF PRESENTATION, One hour and forty-five minutes.



A Spaniard's Revenge,

ACT I

SCENE: Room in Ruiz's home,—Pat discovered brushing his master's hat, and singing.—

PAT. Sure now, an' the masther's hat is retty, an' its toime fer that swate bewitchin craythure that waits on the maisthress, to come an' fix the table. Ou' Patrick O'Fallen ye're a dead man, an' the darlint that broke ye're heart did the murther, S he calls me coward, coward! Ou' Biddy. Ye do not know! But I'll not wai ! I'll do it now! an' whin they bring me back to ye all could an' sthill, ye'll wape o'er ye're cruelty, ves I'll go an' do it now! (Throws off coat,—Biddy appears at door, unseen by Pat.) Farewell to ye Biddy! Fer ye Oi'm goin' out to fame and death. My heart is dyin' fer one look of ye're bright eyes, but I'll not wait! Good-bye darlint, good-bye! (Starts out running—hears shots, starts and screams) By the stars! what's that! (Brushes against Biddy—knocking tray out of her hand and breaking dishes, Biddy boxes his ears.)

BIDDY: There now, ye careless, cowart see what ye've done! Ye ve broken the maisthres' china and I'll be getting the scoulding! Oh, whatever shall I do!

PAT: Och, Biddy darlint, don't ye cry; ye need na' fear the mais thress when Patrick O'Fallen is by to protect ye wid his strong arm. Nae one shall harm ye, for I love ye, so I do; I was just going out to fight for ye, whin—

BIDDY: When ye heard a gun go off, ye cowart!

PAT: No, no, Biddy, whin I heard ye comin' an' ran back for one glance of ye're "blue eyes"

BIDDY: Faith an' I belave ye've bin to ould Ireland this day an, kissed the "Blarney Stone"—But that dont mend the broken plates; oh dear, oh, dear! What shall I do?

PAT: (Going nearer) Do? O Biddy come to me arms! They are strong an' true to protectin' ye. An' my hearts j st dyin' fer one kiss fro' yer swate lips. Biddy darlint give me one glance from ye're blue eyes before I go out to fight for ye just one won't ye?

BIDDY: No I won't! Ye're goin' away to lave me to tell the maistress about the china, ye coward! ye're just sneakin' and lavin' me with all the blame of ye're a'm fault.

PAT: No Biddy darlint I'll tell the maister about it. But I must go an' fight fer this country like a true son of Ireland. Good bye Biddy darlint! When they bring me back to ye dead ye'll be sorry ye let me go without one swate kiss.

BIDDY: When ye die, ye black rascal will be from, scare an' not from fight! Oh Pat Pat, there comes the maister an' whatever shall I do! oh dear, oh dear!

PAT: (backing off) Oh never moind I'll make it all right wid the maister; he'll never scould ye, ye darlint! Good-bye Biddy I'm goin' to lave ye now; I'm going to fight fer ye en' glory.

BIDDY: Ye're goin' to lave me ye coward because ye hear the maister comin' an' yere scart of his scoulding. Ye're a mane cruel fellow an' I hate ye so I do!

PAT: (till backing off and holding out his hands appealingly.) Swate crayture, don't break me heart when I'm goin' out to war an' death jist fe ye! I love ye Biddy, so I do; an' if I live I'll come back to ye some day, covered all over wid glory. I'm brave an' strong, I I—(hears explosion, jumps up in fright and rushes behind Biddy) Au! Au! Howly Moses protect us! ye saints presarve us! Au! help! murtheration!!!

BIDDY: Au yes! Ye're brave an' true ye love me so ye do! Ye're goin' out to fight for me; come on, ye don't need Howly Moses to protect ye nor the saints to presarve ye I can do both!

PAT: (s eaking out tremblingly) Au Biddy, Biddy, don't talk so I'm not scart.

BIDDY: Au Pat ye're no good at all at all; ye have broken me heart in paces onc't this minute by yer cowardice; If yere not scart what makes ye tremble so?

PAT: Sure now Biddy, I'm not trembling. I'm could, an ye ough to know it's me narves that s affected,

BIDDY: Ye thavin' creytur! who ever heard of a man with narves?

PAT: Begorra! But ye're hard on a fellow; (goes nearer and puts arms round her) Come now, an' give me a swate kiss Biddy darlint, be aisy now wid yer folorn Pat I hear the maister now, for shure.

BIDDY: Let me pick up the dishes. (begins to pick up dishes.)

PAT: The maister's comin' an' it's toime fer me to go! an' Biddy if yer won't give me a kiss I'll jist stale it. (kisses her.)

BIDDY: Begone ye thavin' wretch!

PAT: That s jist what I'm doin' now! Goin' off to fight wid the Cubans (goes to the door) Biddy, whin I m gone, ye ll be sorry fer cruelty to Patrick O'Fallen, the brave, an' the true.

BIDDY: Howly Moses! The maister's here almost alretty. an' the baste is laving me to bear the blame for nis broken china!

PAT: (Shot heard outside, Pat screams) Dere now, an' I never done nothin'! Hely, help! Murthur! Help hel'! (rushes in, and falls on floor) Au, I m kilt! Sho to paces! at onct entirely I'm dead, Oi m dead. (Falls down.)

BIDDY: Au Pat, Pat, ye darlint? What 's the mather?

PAT. Shure now an can t ye see? I'm shot to paces an' it's all your fault. (Begins rolling and screaming) Och! murthur, help! (Enters Dr. Ruish hurriedly)

RUIS: What s the trouble, Biddy?

BIDDY: Shure now an I don't know; only Pat says he's kilt an' that's its my fault! Shure now an' can't ye help him, maister, can t ye?

RUIS: Pa shot? Why Biddy you must be mistaken.

BIDDY: Shure now maister, an he's shot! an' its me own heart thats breakin' in papes for I love him, so I do. (Kneels over Pat and weeps.) Au Pat, Pat me darlint I didnt mane to be such a hard hearted crayture! Look at me just once, wid yer own eyes!

RUIS: (who has been examin'g Pat) Biddy, here is no cause for your alarm. This is only a case of Pat's nervousness. Pat my man stand up!

PAT: (Sits up and appears angry) Begorra! how do you expect a dead man to stand up! Faith I belave the world's crazy.

BIDDY: (Throws up her hands in affright) Au au' it s his ghoust that's spakin' Au Pat dead or alive don t harm me!

PAT: Au Biddy ye're swate voice would wake the dead. Ye have brought me back to life, so ye have!

RUIS: Stand up and explain yourself; Pat: a little more of this foolishness and I'll discharge you.

PAT: (gets up tremblingly) Shure an' it s a hard maister that discharges a dead man.

RUIS: Explain yourself I say.

BIDDY: Au I m so scairt, I can't move! I hope Pat's ghoust won t spake to me I'd die so I would.

PAT: Shure now maister an I don t know how to explain; I wint out into the yard an' a sojer stips up to me an sez sez he, pintin' a gun at me pintin' a gun m ind, that mon, sez he wheres yer maister? An' I sez to myself sez I, I'll try my heels an' I troid them. An he sez halt! An' 'bears loike my feet wouldn t stop! an that ould black-guard he jist let go an fired An' I thought I was a dead mon. I m a fool, so I am, excusin' yer honor fer such language

RUIZ: Your language is quite excusable Pat. You would be a fine man but for your cowardice, overcome that and I'll advance you.

PAT: Shure now an I thank ye I'm not a coward at all, at all. It's jist me narves ats affected.

RUIZ: I'll go out and look into this matter. (exit.)

PAT: Au' Biddy Bid y; now I can tell ye how I love ye! Biddy—

BIDDY: (Looks at him in horror) An' I don't want o be made love to by a mon s'ghoust! Kape away from me

PAT: (goes nearer) Au Biddy I'm not kilt I'm alive! Faith an' these confounded narves of mine have got me in a fix! an' me own Biddy thinks I'm a ghoust! an' I don't know what to do. Au Biddy whin ye feel me strong arms about yer pretty waist, ye'll know I'm alive (Goes to her and puts his arm round her waist. Rita appears at door Biddy screams)

RITA: Biddy, what is the cause of this disturbance? If you and Pat desire to converse retire to the servant's hall.

PAT: Yes m beg I yer pardin maisthress; But it wasn't me. Biddy is moighty swate an temptin jist like all women ye know an an—

RITA: Biddy, how is it that dinner is not prepared?

BIDDY: Pat will tell ye maisthress he said he'd make it all right wid ye Shure an' the broken things is not me own fault. Ask Pat he'll tell ye all about it.

RITA: Pat has nothing whatever to do with the dinner I hold you entirely responsible.

PAT: Shure now an the maisthress an angel of goodness an justice.

BIDDY: I know now its Pat spakin. Pat alive and well. No ghoust could be so mane entirely!

RITA: Pat call your master! Biddy bring the dinner!

PAT: Call my maister? I wonder if any more of them guns is goin off? I'm in a fix now, the guns on one side an' the maisthress on the other but bless ould Ireland, I'd rayther face ten thousand guns than one mad maisthress. (exit.)

RITA: Biddy I do not wish to scold you for you have been a good faithful girl yet I cannot possibly permit such carelessness as you have shown here this morning.

BIDDY: Shure an ye won't scould me when I tell ye about it I did nt mane to do it an I could nt kape from it. I was jis comin in at one door an Pat was comin in the other, (cries) an' I did nt see him (cries) an' I run against him an' spilt the things an broke dishes. Shure now an' I didnt mane to do it.

RITA: There that will do my good girl. I'm never cross abo it an accident That blundering Pat keeps the house in a regular turmoil. I shall ask your master to discharge him.

BIDDY: An' ye don't mane it! The broken things is all my fault an' he is a good boy, an' ye wont send him away. will ye maisthress?

RITA: I wonder what can be the meaning of the skirmishing so near the town! All morning I have heard the report of continuous firing in the outskirts, and now shot and shell are falling around us. I fear isaster is near! I shall persuade Ricardo to fly with myself and children to some safe place. We have no part in this terrible war, for though by right of blood I am Spanish and he Cuban, we and our children are in truth Americans; and the stars and stripes float in protecting glory over us. (Not heard without; Pat comes running in.)

PAT: Begorra! an' thim honads are afther me agin! Faith an I'm goin to sthay in the house all day! (Enter Dr. Ruiz.)

RUIZ: Rita my wife, my best beloved; give thou thanks to-day, that in this perilous time thou canst rest secure. 'Tis thine own countrymen bringing such misery upon the land. But now I saw a simple unoffending citizen torn from the bosom of his family and sent to his death before the eyes of his frightened wife and children. O Rita! were it not that these wretches are thine own countrymen, I would throw off this conservative course, and in the true American spirit give myself up, body and soul, to the cause of the rebels. But I cannot leave thee at the mercy of this bloodthirsty people! A man's first duty is to protect his wife and helpless children, and that will I do—yea, though it cost me my life and blood!

RITA: Ricardo, let us fly—let us haste from these scenes of carnage! I do not fear for myself. They will not harm me! But I dreamed, oh! husband of my soul, that you were torn from me! Listen! in my dream, I saw the dark lowering face of our enemy Fondesveila! He stood between us, and stretching out his great villainous hands forced you from me! It seemed then as if a mist arose, and a I gazed enveloped you. Yet, peering out of it forever shone his hated face. I had lost sight of you, yet I could never lose sight of him. Oh Ricardo, let us fly! It matters not where, but let us go! I fear for your life, my heart tells me they will kill you. Your death would be mine—I have given up all for thee; home friends and country; and I will follow thee to the ends of the earth. Without thy love, my heart would languish. In thy life I live, in thy death die!

RUIZ: Thou art ill, Rita else thou wouldst not be so weak as to allow a dream to annoy thee. Dost thou not know dear that I have become a citizen of the states? We are now children of America; and well doth she protect her offspring! The violent shrink before her frown the hardy tremble at her feet; and none dare molest her children! Fear not thou for our country is "The land of the free and the home of the brave." Let him who dare insult us, then shall her vengeance fall!

RITA: O Ricardo, thou art strong and I am weak; bear thou with me yet, as you say I am ill. The dream haunts me. In this hostile land I can know no peace. I believe, yea I know, danger and also

death await thee! Thou speakest of vengeance, Ricardo, but what would that avail, if thou wert gone? O, the thought maddens me! Come, let us fly, now! This very moment!

RUIZ: Calm thyself child! I do not understand thee!

ITA: Calm myself? Calm myself, when my blood leaps in frenzy through my veins, and beats in anger on my brain,—carrying with it ever and anon, the image of his vengeful face! O, Ricardo, I am mad—mad! Protect thyself that we may yet live and love.

RUIZ: Listen to me, Rita. I fear nothing—no one—yet I swear by the love I bear thee that with thee and our little ones, I will leave this place to-morrow!

RITA: To-morrow? O, Ricardo, say to-day!

RUIZ: To-morrow!

RITA: To-morrow. O, ye merciful heavens to-morrow will be too late!

RUIZ: To-morrow thou and I, with our little ones will fly to that land of which I told thee. There our lives will be one grand, sweet song. There I will teach thee to be glad again—joyous as thou wert in thy girlhood home before thou came away with me.

PAT: Begorra if he aint making love to her all over again! Faith, an' I didn't know married folks was so lovin'. (Enter Biddy with children.)

BIDDY: Here are the children, Maisthress. I found them in the garden talking about the fairies, an' I belave the darlints belave in them ent' eiy.

RICARDITO: We do, cause we heard 'em didn't we, sister?

EVANGELIN: 'Es we did. Wh, Mama we heard them d's as p'ain as I tan'y u when you talks to me. The fairies were in the rose-bush cause we heard 'em?

RITA: Biddy what do the children mean? Have you been playing off any pranks on them?

BIDDY: Shure an' I don't know no more than you do an' I can't understand it at all, at all.

RICARDITO: Of course you don't. Nobody understands the fairies.

EVA: Nobody but dood 'ittle dirls. Boys never do.

RICARDITO: Well, if you hadn't answered Biddy when she called, I'd a known all about it!

EVA: Biddy spoiled it all. I don't like nurses they are always in the way.

RICARDITO: Specially when they are like Biddy! The fairy behind the rose bush said: 'Come here children and let me give you something for your papa;' Then Biddy called and scared the fairy away.

EVA: Biddy's mean, I dont like her. She shan't dress my dolly any more. No yon tan't, you old mean Biddy! Come on Buddie, lets play. (Exit Biddy and children.)

RITA: Some one of the servants have been trying to frighten the

children. You must look into the matter Ricardo. (Enter Mer.)

MER: Ricardo you must fly you are shadowed; a terrible scheme is being contrived to cast you into prison. Quick, haste, go now before it is too late!

RITA: What mean you girl? Why should I fly? I am an unoffending citizen abiding peacefully in the bosom of my family. Only the guilty flee from justice the innocent embrace it! Let them hatch their schemes; I have no fear.

MER: O, Ricardo! You do not know with whom you have to deal else you would not speak so rashly. I was in the garden gathering roses for the children, when I heard my name spoken in a low, cautious voice. I could see no one, but from behind the dark foliage a strange hand passed me a note, and the unseen person had me haste with it to you, saying that in thus warning you he risked his life. And as I turned to go that same voice whispered the dreaded name,—Fondesveila!

RITA: Ye powers of everlasting darkness! Shall I never escape his vengeance.

MER: Ricardo, read this warning delivered by an unknown hand. (hands him a note.)

RUIZ: (Reading) A terrible fate awaits you. Your only hope lies in flight—a friend,

RITA: The dream! The dream! (Runs to entrances, looks out.) O, Ricardo, your only hope lies in flight! Ricardo, if thou lovest me, go! I care not what fate befalls me—if thou art only safe Remember thou—oh lover of my soul—that thy life is mine—and leave me!

RUIZ: Leave thee in that villain's clutches? Never! Rita, when I took the marriage vow I swore to protect thee, and through life and death I will keep that vow!

RITA: O that I should be thy ruin! There is no light, no life no love—if thou, Ricardo wilt die! Is there no hope? No hope?

MER: Yes; the secret passage! Rita,—Ricardo, Go ere it is too late!

RITA: Yes, the secret passage Come! (Forces Ricardo to the door, Fondesveila intercepts,—Rita throws hands to head in despair and screams.)

RITA: Fondesveila!

FON: Good morning, Rita. Thou art beautiful as ever. Come, little one, and give me a kiss as in the days gone by.

RUIZ: Silence ha! Insult my wife again and hell itself will give me power to kill you!

FON: You are rather violent for a doomed man. I have here upon my person a warrant for your arrest. It can be proven beyond a doubt that you were the instigator of a plan for wrecking a train which bore supplies and reinforcements to the Spanish camp. Your infernal scheme was carried into execution last night. Make no resistance for I have the house surrounded by armed men, and you are in my power.

RUIZ: Have no fear I shall not resist. I am perfectly guiltless of any part in this intrigue. My wife and I spent last evening with a friend. I can prove an alibi!

RITA: Fondesveilia—vilest of the vile —It seems as if your terrible hatred and dastardly revenge will follow me and mine even to the brink of the grave Yet know you that even in this your seeming triumph, I yet defy you. Do your worst! You can never separate us! for where ever my husband goes, there will I go; his prison shall be my paradise; his death my death his grave my everlasting resting place.

FON: (Calling to those outside) Come my men! (Enter two guards) Place the shackles on my prisoner. Keep Madam Ruiz from her husband! We do not care to witness an affectionate farewell. (To Rita,) More, but one step, and you are dead! (Draws sword)

RITA: And what is death! Think ye I fear it! I would rather spend one moment by Ricardo's side than live a lifetime were he not here. (Starts toward Ricardo soldier forces her back.)

FON: Put the shackles on that man, we have no time to waste in parley.

MER: Villian! Were I a man I'd kill you!

FON: Spoil not thy fair face, Senorita, by such an ugly stare. (To soldiers,) Make haste and shackle him.

RITA: Fondesveilia you surely would not chain him as a dog? Hear me Fondesveilia, for the first time in my life I humble myself. I implore I beg of you do what you will with me; drag me as a slave throughout the streets, but do not place those awful chains upon Ricardo. (Soldiers hesitate.)

FON: 'Tis much against my principals, to refuse such gentle pleading; but as a Spanish officer I must do my duty. (To soldiers,) Obey me! (soldiers handcuff Ruiz)

RITA: Fondesveilia, for the love of mercy I implore you to desist.

RUIZ: Rita, I beg, nay by the love thou bearest me, I command thee to say no more. Taint not thyself by speech with that wretch. This blow has fallen on the head of an innocent man I know not what may come. But Rita, if aught befall thee or thine through the treachery of these men remember that I am an American, and she will avenge an insult offered to her children. In this knowledge I rest. Heed this my parting injunction: and in the hour of danger, if thy Ricardo be not by to protect thee, flee with the swiftness of the wind to America, the country of my adoption O Rita that I should leave thee thus without one word of parting, one touch of thy dear hands one kiss from thy sweet lips.

RITA: Ricardo, in the love of mercy say no more! It will kill me! (starts towards Ricardo)

SOLDIER: Come no nearer Senora

MER: Brother, farewell. I at least may embrace you.

EVA (To Fon): Please don't hurt my mama! You are a dreat big man and ought to be good to my mama. Mama pitty little mama

don't cry. They won't hurt you. Will you, Mr. Big Man?

RICARDITO: Come, sister, let's kiss papa good-bye. These mean men are going to take him away.

RUIZ (kissing each of the children): My children—sunshine of thy mother's life and mine—I must leave thee! I do not know when I shall return to thee perhaps never. If I do not, thou must both remember my only command to thee is that thou love thy dear mother. My son, the days will come and go quickly and ere long thou wilt wake to find thyself grown to manhood. If then thy father be no more it will be thy sacred duty to protect thy mother. Mercedes, rosebud of my heart; Rita, Rita, light of my life, farewell! Live thy lives in peace nor let the shadow of my misfortune exclude the sunlight of thy happiness; sing and be glad yet steal away from the gay throng now and then to find my everlasting resting place. And in the solitude of night let fall a tear upon the grave of him whom thou wilt see no more. Loved ones once more farewell!

RITA: Ricardo, thou wilt not surely die! O death! take thou me in thy cold embrace; press thy frozen lips to mine, and let me die!

FON: Again, I command you to the prison with your man! Ricardo Ruiz, are you ready?

RUIZ: I am ready. Fondesveila, you have your revenge. I am in your power. Do with me as you will; heap upon me the tortures of the inquisition, I will not shrink; thrust me into the fiery furnace. I can face death unflinchingly; but if you so much as harm one hair on the head of the woman who bears my name the grave itself shall not keep Ricardo Ruiz from his revenge! (Curtain)



A SPANIARD'S REVENGE.

ACT II.

SCENE, SAME AS ACT I.

MERCEDES—(Looking out center door): Is it true that you are going from us forever? I fear it is! and I feel that this last lingering gaze is my sad farewell. They are taking you from me. Your beloved form grows more and more indistinct with each retreating footstep. O, merciful heaven have pity upon this stricken house. Thy force him onward! From this shadowy distance my blinded eyes fail me! I have looked my last upon my brother. How can this life be lived without you? Ricardo come back to your home and helpless family: O, Ricardo, come back come back! (Enter Pat.)

PAT: There's a gentleman outside to see ye, Miss.

MER: Do not admit him. I receive no one to-day.

PAT: Yes, Miss, but he's such a foine lookin' gentleman, an' he's got a umbrella an' a cane.

MER: Pat, you are impertinent! It matters not what his character or personal appearance be, I do not wish to see him. That is all.

PAT: Ach an' ye're a turnin' a very prince from yer door.

MER: Were he a king, my answer would still be the same. Take him this word: Neither myself or Senora Ruiz will receive any guest at the present time.

PAT: Ach, now Miss, ye won't be so hard on a poor fellow! He wants to see ye about the Masther an' help ye so he sez. Won't ye see him, Miss?

MER: Your impertinent persistence makes an explanation necessary. As you know, my brother, through the instrumentality of Eulate Fondesveila, has become a Spanish prisoner, and that his family are now unprotected.

There is no law to the lawless, and every Spaniard, whether he come as friend or foe, is to be considered but as a ravening wolf, seeking an opportunity to seize and devour, the helpless family of the doomed patriot. Our only hope of safety lies in keeping all persons from us, and for this reason I would have you guard the house well. Let no one enter. You understand me?

PET: Yis mum!

MER: And Pat, if you only have the courage, you can help me rescue Ricardo. Will you?

PAT: Well now, an' ye see its this way. I've got the courage for shure I have. But I'm skeered that if I get in with them Spanish hounds; my narves'd fail me. Ye know they're kind o' shaky.

MER: You are are a consummate coward! Oh, that I had your physical being or you my fearlessness. Go out of my sight. I cannot endure to look upon that which is a man, and yet is not. Go into the garden and do not let me see your cowardly face to-day.

PAT: Yess miss. (aside) Faith an' I may be a coward but I a'int no fool! An' I aint a'goin' to let that foine gintleman lave this house nayther. I'll jist misunderstand thim orders an bring him in. Ach! an'its a foine thing to have since, if ye haint got narves. (Exit.)

MER: If I had but a man's strength I might foil this treacherous Fondesveila, and save my brother. I know no one save Pat to whom I could trust my secret, and if he were but as brave as he is strong we would succeed. Shall I see him languish In a Spanish prison with no one by to comfort or to aid him? No; a thousand times, no! Ricardo, I will find and rescue you from your keepers. But how how? I can not say, still I will save him if he but live! (Victor Leslie appears at door.)

VIC: This must be the room! Yes, I am sure! There is my little Spanish maid. Her name, I believe, is Mercedes (goes to her). Hist, Mercedes! (Mercedes starts) Make no sound! I am watched, and if my mission be discovered, we may both lose our lives.

MER: And who are you?

VIC: A friend.

MER: Those hated of Fondesveila have no friends.

VIC: You mistake; for you have a friend, and he would not fear to declare himself as such to Fondesveila himself.

MER: You spoke of a mission. What is it?

VIC: To make a long story short, I wish to take your brother from the enemy.

MER: (Laughs scornfully) And so that is the trap you lay for the unsuspecting Senorita, is it? Well, for your own satisfaction I will tell you, she will not fall into it! I know the treachery of your people and shall not become a victim (Laughs scornfully.) You think to deceive me by soft words and offers of assistance, but I shall not betray myself. And know you once for all, there is not a Spaniard upon the Cuban isle into whose hands I would put my secret.

VIC: (Throws off Spanish cloak and hat) Mercedes, I am not a Spaniard!

MER: If not what are you?

VIC: An American!

MER: An American you say! If that be true, then I will trust you

with my life

VIC: It is true, Mercedes: True as life itself.

MER: Then how came you here?

VIC: I belong to the American Press Association, and being of an adventurous nature came here in search of news and historical matter. I learned of your brother's peril and did all I could to save him. Did the warning come too late?

MER: O tell me tell me are you--

VIC: The "unknown friend"!

MER: I should have known that none but an American would be so brave; and I offer you my thanks giving: Here upon my knees I pour out my heart's deep gratitude and take the Spanish maiden's oath of fidelity. If ever the time comes when you need a woman's hand to guide or guard you, you will find Mercedes, the Spanish *Senorita* ready to offer her life in payment for the debt of gratitude she owes you. We Spaniards are proud and true. We never forget those who render us a service.

VIC: Rise, Mercedes. It is unbecoming that you should kneel to me. I have done but that which any man should do for another in distress. And I am willing to aid you in the rescue of your brother. Have you confidence in me, a stranger?

MER: My "unknown friend," my American protector ask you not that question!

VIC: And I may undertake his rescue, and you will aid me?

MER: Decide upon your plan. I will do all you ask.

VIC: I have done so and the task which I have laid out for you is fraught with danger. Do you shrink from imperiling your life?

MER: For my brother—no!

VIC: I knew that you were brave! You must discover the prison in which Ricardo is confined. This much I must know, but for me to seek it would arouse suspicion; for you it will be different. They will not suspect you. Mercedes, find the prison and Ricardo's cell and I will deem it no risk too great, and if it is within my power will accomplish his release. I must not stay longer; if I be discovered it will not be well for either of us. Farewell.

MER: Do not leave till you have told me your name.

VIC: For your own safety, I dare not! Some happier time you may know me for what I am and then I trust we will be friends.

MER: (Aside) Friends? Friends? No! Rather would I be his enemy. Friend, what a senseless word! (To Vic) Look; Fondesveila is coming. Leave me quickly, or we are lost! (Vic. picks up his hat and coat, then kisses Mer.'s hand) Go, go, or we are lost! (Exit Vic.) Why does he go so slowly? Why does he not run? I fear he will be caught, and if he is, (takes out dagger) I will kill the one who takes him! (Enter Fon) (Mercedes secretes dagger.)

FON: Aha, you see I have returned. It is quite impossible for me

to remain long away from those who have enslaved my affections.

MER: 'Tis indeed a pity for you to lavish your affections upon those who receive them so unkindly.

FON: I would suggest; girl, that you be a trifle more civil.

MER: I'd like to be your civil executioner!

FON: Enough of this personality (takes her hands roughly). Answer me truthfully, girl, did I not hear voices when I entered?

MER: And if you did, has it come to such a pass that I must have permission from you before conversing with the household?

FON: Jest not with me! I heard a man's voice as I came in. And I tell you now if you are plotting with some lover to thwart me you will come to grief. I brook no interference. If you cross my path I will assign you such a punishment that death itself will be a boon not granted you. I am in authority here, and this house shall stand as others before it be subjugated. For all Spain honors, and Cuba fears the name of Fondesveila.

MER: Seek not to intimidate me, Fondesveila! Have a care man lest at some time you are slain by a woman's avengeful hand! (Enter Biddy and Pat with children.)

BIDDY: Ach, an' that rascal's here agin. Faith an' he'd skeer a dead man!

PAT: Begorra, an' I'm not shure but he skeered me into a dead man! (Enter Rita.)

RITA: (Seats herself—does not notice Fon.) Mercedes my sister, come to me; let me take your hand in mine that I may know you, too, have not been torn from me. O, Mercedes, my heart is dead my soul is blind. Bring me my children (weeps).

EVA: Don't cry, mama; pretty mama—papa'll come back to you and then we will kill that mean man. You are a bad man, to steal my papa; and I hate you.

MER: Biddy, take the children away. This is no place for them.

BIDDY: Yes mu'n. Come on, ye darlins. Biddy'll tell you a story that will make ye forgit all about that baste's meanness. Come on.

EVA: I don't want a fairy story. I'm a going to stay by my mama till that mean man goes away.

RI: Didn't you hear papa tell me to take care of mama! I'll not leave till that man does.

MER: Yes, dear, your father told you to protect all women, but he meant when you grew to be a man.

RI: Well, I guess I'm most a man now. aint I?

MER: Yes, dear; almost but be a good little man, and go with Biddy.

BIDDY: Come dearies, an' ye own Biddy will tell ye all about the fairies! Come on Pat. (Biddy and children exit.)

PAT: Faith she talks loike Oi was tied to her apron string. Faith, an' Oi blame Oi am. (Aside.) That ould blackguard is looking at the

Maisthress loike he was up to no good. Or'd kill him if I wasn't so confounded nervous! (Exit.)

MER: Fon, you have carried out your diabolical scheme and I see no need of you remaining longer. Go! and take my curses with you! There is no torture to which I would not consign you. Had I the power I would send you to a living tomb. Go! Fiend incarnate. Go!

FON: Not yet, beautiful Senorita not yet. My purpose is not accomplished; for when I leave this place Senora Ruiz goes with me.

MER: (Aside) I think not! (exit)

FON: (Goes to Rita takes her hand) Come, Rita; after all these years of waiting you are mine at last!

RITA: (Kissing and thrusting him aside) Fiend! What would you now? I feel that I am mad; my brain is reeling beneath its weight and anguish. Go! and gloat over your success. Stay not here to taunt me with my weakness. Go—and let me die!

FON: No Rita; I cannot let you die. I hope yet to enjoy many happy hours with you my loved one. O, Rita I have loved you with a love that has thrust me into the very depths of hell, and raised me to the heights of heaven that has inspired me with the holiest sentiments, and forced me into the darkest crimes the human mind can know. From the hour you refused me and accepted Ricardo, my heart has known but one passion and that is murder! murder! murder! (Aside) No no. I cannot! (To Rita) And now Rita, you are mine—do not shrink from me—you are mine and cannot help yourself!

RITA: But I can help myself. The American government stands between me and harm. What mean you by this insolence?

FON: The American government—bah! It did not save Ricardo; neither shall it step from its height of dignity to protect you. What do I mean? Simply this: I shall have the Spanish government grant you a decree of divorce and you shall become the wife of the Spanish officer Fondesveila!

RITA: That I shall never do.

FON: Wait till you have heard me through. I tell you, Rita, you shall be my wife!

RITA: Never! No power on land or sea could make me so.

FON: Be not so sure! By this time Ricardo lies in prison, awaiting his trial which means to him death. I and I alone, can save him. If you come with me upon the conditions mentioned, he shall have life and liberty. If not—he shall have death. Make your decision now!

RITA: With all your wickedness I do not believe you capable of a crime so heinous. You will not withhold testimony that will clear a guiltless man. You will not allow a guiltless man to suffer the death penalty?

FON: The matter is no longer within my hands. Your husband's

life rests entirely within your own.

RITA: Fiend, do as you will! My Ricardo would rather die a thousand deaths, than that his wife should know dishonor!

FON: And she defies me. I shall try another plan. (To Rita) And so you mete out death to your beloved husband? I really had not expected such a show of affection. 'Tis indeed touching.

RITA: Taunt, threaten, as you will! No suffering can change my purpose and I shall live or die true to my husband.

FON: Will he appreciate your truth, when I visit him in his cell explain to him your peculiar devotion which condemns him to death, when it could as easily give him life.

RITA: O, fate, cruel fate, that his bitterest enemy may visit him and I may not! Fondesveila if you think I shall submit to your wicked scheme you are mistaken. I shall use every means within my power to free my husband, and punish you! O, fool, you know not the depth of woman's love, nor the breadth of woman's hate. In both is she mightier than man and through them shall I conquer you.

FON: Think so, my pretty one? A carriage awaits me at the door—all is fair in love or war—if you will not listen to my fair entreaties, then I shall do with you as I like—Come! (Fondesveila attempts to take Rita out, Mercedes enters and throws herself between them.)

MER: Not so! For I shall protect her with my life!

FON: You? you mite of a girl. How could you protect any one? Stand aside! Come on Rita? We will go now. (Enters Biddy with rolling pin in her hand—rushes between Rita and Fon., Pat also enters.)

BIDDY: Faith I ain't nothing but an Irish Biddy, but I'll take care of the maistress. Don't ye tech 'er!

PAT: An' if ye tech that swate little gal of mine—I'll I'll—git out of the way—Confound my narves!

FON: (To Biddy) Stand aside girl (Thrusts Biddy aside, puts arm round Rita's waist and forces her toward the door) Come, my beauty, come!

RITA: (screams) Help! help! save me!

VIC: (enters) Would you harm a defenseless woman? (Thrusts Fon aside.)

FON: Who are you that you dare interfere with me?

VIC: I am Victor Leslie an American! (Quick Curtain.)



A SPANIARD'S REVENGE.

ACT III.

SCENE—GARDEN. STORM GRADUALLY COMING ON. THUNDER, R IN
AND LIGHTNING IN LATTER HALF OF ACT. CHILDREN DISCOV-
ERED PLAYING.

BIDDY: (Entering) Here the darlins are, a playin' as nice an' swate as ye plaze. Shure now an' I can't understhand the Maisthress at all, any more. She don't same to notice the children or anything since the Masther's been taken away. She jest wapes an' everything is goin' to ruin at onct alreddy—everything's spoilt. The Maisthress lost her husband an' I've lost me swatehart. Ou, Pat—, Pat, ye didn't know how it broke yer Biddy's heart to send ye away. Ou, Pat, I love ye so I do; an' if ye weren't sich a coward I'd marry ye to-day! But I'm far away from me own counthry an' when I marry 'twill be some man who can take care o' me. But oh, Pat, I love ye wid me whole heart an' I'll never marry anither. (To children) Come on now; let's go to the house.

RI: But we don't want to go to the house, do we, sister?

EVA: No, we don't, and we won't!

BIDDY: O, whatever shall I do? The children won't moind' an' the Maisthress won't make 'em. Faith, an' the whole place is goin' to paces since the Masther left. (Busies herself with children—Pat enters unseen by Biddy.)

PAT: O, there is the darlint craythur that I aint sit eyes on fer many a day. Ach! but ain't she a beauty? Ain't she swate? But she don't know her old Pat since the Maisthress drest her up so foine, and give her so much money. Ou, Patrick, old fellow, yere a fool so ye are an' if it hadn't been fer ye're confounded narves ye'd a had yer own Biddy a lovin' ye right now. An' now she'll not even notice ye! I'll just spake to her. Confound my narve, I begin to tremble at the very thought of a glance from thim blue eyes.

BIDDY: Come on, dearies; let yer own Biddy take ye home like good children. For its gettin' dark an' a storm's comin' up fast.

EVA: O, Biddy, there's Pat.

BIDDY: Well, never moind' Pat; come on.

PAT: Now I'll spake to her if it kills me! (starts to her, retreats) Holy shmoke, an' why don't she look at me?

EVA: Biddy, there's Pat!

BIDDY: Never moind' Pat, I say!

PAT: Now I'll spake to her or die! Confound it, confound it I say! An' I don't like women no way; they're so mane and decateful—

always a temptin' a man by their swateness, an' then when ye git 'em thay're nothing but red pepper. I m goin' to spake o her an' let her know I don t care if she did send me away. (starts up and after much advancing and retreating, touches her arm) Biddy, yer own Pat wants to spake to ye.

BIDDY: Whin ye want to spake to me, Mr. O Fallen, call me Miss O'Grady, if yer plaze!

PAT: Holy shmoke! an' ain't she peppery? Yes mum excuse me Miss O'Grady, if you plaze!

BIDDY: Goose! Ye ve no more since than when ye left!

PAT: That's jest right; I haven't much since, or I wouldn't be lovin' ye so hard Biddy darlint me heart s bin like lead since ye sint me away, an' I ain't slaped ner ate. I'm jest a pinin' away an' dyin fer the love of ye. Shure now an' I ain t much, but I d marry ye to-morrow, if ye'd have me!

BIDDY: Ye would, would ye? Well ye re not the only tin can in our back yard"—a young Cuban s done asked me.

PAT: Ye won't marry an ould wager like him, will ye?

BIDDY: I don't know; but I expect I will.

PAT: O, Biddy, plaze don't Ye shurely won't brake me heart like that. Biddy, say ye dont like that wager.

BIDDY: Faith, an' I ain't got time. I must take the children in.

PAT: O, Biddy, Biddy, swatest crathure on airth; don't lave me. Stay wid yer own Pat what loves ye.

BIDDY: I can t Pat.

PAT: An' I d loike to know the reason why ye can't!

BIDDY: Well, the reason is aisy enough. I'm goin' to mate me Cuban.

PAT: Ach, Biddy, an ye're killin' me so ye are. Darlint, swate-heart, lovliest of bein s don't lave me.

BIDDY: Come on, children; let's go. 'Ta ra, Pat. ' (Exit Biddy and children. Eva runs back to Pat.)

EVA: Don't feel bad, Pat. Biddy's a good girl, and she loves you

PAT (kissing her): Shure now, an ye're an angil; an' I ll never fergit ye.

EVA: I've got to g now. Good-bye! (Exit)

PAT: Good-bye. Begorra an' if I could only belave her, I d be the happiest man on airth. Faith an' I don t know what to do; women are sich bothers. Ye never can tell what they mane. I'll go ask Mr. Leslie He knows everything. (Exit)

MER: How dark it grows and how quickly the storm approaches. Yet I would gladly bear my head and rush into a mightier gale than this for you oh, Ricardo! If Victorian and I succeed you will yet be free! Victorian Victorian—how sweet the name falls on my ear! Before I knew it, I had given him my heart. O Victorian I love you with all the passion of a Spanish girl. But I must not think of him. He will

soon leave this country for his own and choose for his bride some maid of that fair clime. And then the Spanish *senorita* will remain but as a dream. O Victorian those northern women with their white faces and cold hearts, cannot love as I do. Yet you choose them and I love on with ever growing madness and you will not see? (Pauses; seats herself on rustic bench. Enter Vic.)

VIC: Why so pensive Mercedes?

MER: Ah I was only thinking. Is it any wonder that my thoughts are sad?

VIC: No, child; the wonder is that you bear up so well. You have been a brave little Spanish maid during these trying times.

MER: Spanish girls are always brave—when they love.

VIC: You have shown that in your devotion to your sister and her husband.

MER: But come, Victorian we have no time to waste. See how dark it grows! The storm will soon burst in all its fury, and may retard us.

VIC: Not so Mercedes. The storm but aids us. To brave a prison guarded by so many men is no light task for one. Are you sure you have discovered and can lead me to Ricardo's cell?

MER: I am sure. Last night when all was still, I crept into the principal passageway of the prison and hiding myself listened. 'Twas near midnight when Fondesveila came down the passage. He entered the meanest cell, and I crept to the door to listen and O, Victor, such sounds of anguish I never heard. They froze my very blood. I would have given my life to have moved, but could not. Fondesveila was torturing Ricardo hoping to make him write a note to Rita, telling her to save his life by securing a divorce and marrying Fondesveila. This Ricardo would not do, and at last his tormentor left him; and I crept away. But as I turned to go, I heard Fondesveila say to Ricardo: 'Twere better for you that you wrote that note, for to-morrow you die! 'O, come Victorian come quickly; let us save Ricardo.

VIC: 'Tis too early yet. I dare not return till nearly morning—it would be utter madness to go now.

MER: And while we wait, perhaps Ricardo dies.

VIC: I trust not! Mercedes, I am taking a bold step. It may mean freedom for Ricardo. It may mean death for me. And though life is very sweet I would not have you think I fear death; and you must not think me brave that I thus risk my life, for I hold a true man is ready to die at any minute if his duty demand it. Mercedes before I met you death meant little to me; simply an inevitable passing from this life into that beyond. But now that I know you, all is changed. I long to live and love you. Mercedes my heart is yours; and my dream is that some day you will be my bride. O, child, I desire your love as only a strong man can desire the love of a perfect woman. Give me one word of comfort to take with me in this night

of danger. Tell me that you love me.

MER: All that you desire shall be yours for I love you!

VIC: Those words bring more joy to my heart than have ever known. But I dare not say more lest life seem so sweet that I shrink from the dangers of the night. See! The storm is upon us, and we must go if we save Ricardo Ruiz. (Exit)

RITA (enters): And have I escaped at last, or does he still follow? Ah no, he has not yet come and I have security in the terror of the night! But the darkness will not last. The roar of the storm and the lash of the gale will cease. The searching light of day will penetrate the remotest corner of the land and discover my hiding place, and then oh, Rita!—where wilt thou fly, that thou mayest escape his wrath! Roar on oh storm, and rage ye winds! Enshroud the earth in darkest gloom till life itself be past; then I no more his hatred face may see! O Ricardo, where art thou that thou dost not hear thy Rita's cry or see the fiend pursuing her? To-night he may not seek me, but to-morrow no roof may shelter. O kind protecting night, stretch out into eternity and hide me from my foe. Can it be but three short months since my Ricardo left me? Three months or ages since I was a happy wife; asking nothing desiring nothing that was not mine. But three short months and my Ricardo kept me safe in the shelter of his arms; and now I have not where to lay my head. He comes! My enemy approaches and whither shall I fly? Is there no hiding place?—No shelter from his hate? Yes! Yonder rolls the wildly tossing river—in its bosom I shall be free in death! Am I mad that I forget my children? Let come what may I cannot leave them to his mercy. Shelter thou me, oh night of storm, and teach me what to do; for my pursuer comes!

PAT (entering): Shure now, an' I thought I'd jest come back an' take a peep at the spot where I last saw me swate Biddy. Holy shmoke! an' what is that! The Maisthress out in sich a storm loike this! Begorra an' I don't understand it at all, at all! I ask yer pardin, Maisthress, but -

RITA: Pat, is that you? I thought—I thought—

PAT (aside): An' what's the matter now? These women git more perplexin' all the time. Now, there is me own Biddy a takin on over an ould Cuban—no more than a wager I say—an' here's the Maisthress; who niver so much as put her little foot out on the damp ground, a roamin' out in a sthorm like this (to Rita) Askin yer pardin, Maisthress, hopin' ye will excuse me fer sayin' it but, hang it all, it's a rainin'!

RITA: I know it, Pat.

PAT (aside): I know it, Pat! Well did I ever in me loife? I know it, Pat! An' she kapes a sittin' there jist loike the sun was a shinin'. Faith an' I believe the world's been a standin' on the wrong ind since the Masther left. Maisthress I hope you won't think I'm imperti-

ment if I—if I—confound my nerves!—if I ask ye to go home!

RITA: Go home? O, that I could once more call that dear spot home! Pat, I have no home.

PAT: What's the matter now—am I talkin' to a woman, or a ghost? What's the matter with the big house over the way where we all live?

RITA: Pat, my good fellow we live there no more. I have not one foot of ground, not one penny in the world. All, all, has been confiscated by the Spanish government. But now, Fondesveila came to inform me of the fact, and I was compelled to rush out in the night that I might escape him. There is no where that I may go; no house that I may enter; for I am an outcast. Those who would succor me dare not; it would but incur the wrath of those Spanish hounds. Even the brave falter before their cruelty. Could I reach America I would be safe; but I cannot reach her shore. All is dark. There is not one ray of light. To-morrow they will find me, and then oh the horror of it! I shall be at the mercy of Fondesveila!

PAT: Shure now, Maisthress, an' it ain't so bad as that. Niver moind; don't wape so hard. I'll fix it fer ye. I've got a shmall place;—to be shure, it's but a mane place fer the likes of ye, but if ye don't moind its rough walls, ye can go and live with Pat the coward.

RITA: O, thank you, thank you Pat. You may take my little ones and care for them. What befalls me does not matter now, since they are safe.

FON (enter): Ah I have found you, my pretty one. There is nothing to keep you from me this time. You shall go with me!

PAT: Well, I reckon not! Pat O Fallen ain't goin' to sthand by an' see an ould rascal loike ye, harm the Maisthress. When ye take her, ye take me; faith, an I don't belave ye want the two of us!

(Enter Biddy) BIDDY: Ou Pat, Pat, I'll never call ye coward any more an' ye can have me now if ye want me.

PAT: Come to me arms, Biddy darlint. (Biddy falls into his arms.)

(Enter Vic.) VIC: Hurrah, hurrah, for Pat, the coward!

FON: That American again, curse him!

VIC: Yes, Victor Leslie! And if you further annoy this woman (raising hand protectingly over Rita) you shall learn to tremble at the name of 'that American'!

FON: Not I my friend, not I. You shall suffer for this hotheadedness. You have gone too far. (enter Spanish soldiers) The gates of a Spanish prison are waiting to close upon you and woe be unto him who enters there! (to soldiers) Take him into custody. Treat him as you did the last prisoner, Ricardo Ruiz! (Soldiers start toward Vic. Rita clings to him.—Mercedes enters unfurls a United States flag, and waves it over Victor.)

MER: This man is an American, and under the protection of the "Stars and Stripes"! Lay your hand upon him and you insult this flag!! (Soldiers step back and lift their hats.) (Quick curtain.)

A SPANIARD'S REVENGE

ACT IV.

SCENE:—PRISON CELL. RICARDO DISCOVERED SLEEPING ON FLOOR.
FURNITURE—ONE CHAIR.

RUIZ: Ah, Rita, I knew that you would come! Rita not here? And my joy was but a dream! Awake or asleep, I am haunted by a vision of my wife's sweet face. Thought but tantalizes me the more. I see her face now aglow with pleasure, now pale with despair. Try as I may, I can think of nothing else, and the thought of her brings with it deepest misery. They tore me from her three long months ago, on the pretext of believing me to have assisted the rebels in wrecking a train carrying supplies to the Span'sh troops. That I am innocent my accusers well know and for that reason they have confined me in this mean hole without even so much as a trial. I am simply at the mercy of those fiends and without chance of vindication. I know my doom—a long imprisonment and ultimate death. But I could bear all were it not for the thought of my wife and helpless children alone in this land of war with no one to care for and protect them. O, Rita that I had heeded thee and taken thee and our little ones to a place of safety! But I must waste no time in idle dreaming! I have work to do! O, Fondesveila! You did not know to what depths a desperate man may go else you never would have allowed this chair sent me by my loving wife to have reached this cell. Could you have known what light it brought into my darkness, what balm it gave to my wounded heart, you would not have allowed it sent me. You thought to torture me by chaining me so I could not rest myself in it, but oh, demon that you are you were mistaken there! For I can see it, and when I do, I fancy that my Rita's head is pillowed there once more: that our children play about her knee; that we are all at home, living a life of peace and love, and all this is but a hideous dream that will pass out of my life forever. And I can do more—I can touch it! and I can mark upon it with my bleeding nails a message to my wife. You had not thought of that! Let me see what I have written—(Reads on chair the message he has written): Mercedes, Ricardito Evangelina—good-bye children of my heart. I give thee my blessing. Be obedient to your mother. Fondesveila will kill me—tell everything. Farewell, farewell! Rita of my soul Fondesveila fiend fury in seeking to torture you have given a poor helpless

man a great joy. Rita dearest to my heart. I know that thou wilt discover this, my farewell, long after thy Ricardo lies silent in the tomb, and may it reach thee how devotedly he loved thee. (Enter Fon.)

FON: My good friend you seem lonesome.

RUIZ: Do I? Well your presence does not alleviate it in the least.

FON: You are not very polite to me, considering that I am the only one who can effect your freedom. You are a queer fellow. Most people are more than glad to welcome those who are in a position to do them a great favor.

RUIZ: I expect and would accept no favors at your hands, but I do desire justice. Give me a trial and I will prove to the world that I am innocent!

FON: Justice? Very pretty sentiment, very; you desire to see justice done? Well, when you do, will be at the point of a gun. Don't you know that 'tis only as a favor to me that the Spanish authorities have not had you executed ere this?

RUIZ: Then order my execution at once. If I were dying and you held in your hand the only means of saving me, such is my hate for you, though I long for life, I would not accept it at your hands.

FON: I can understand your feelings and pity you. Men always hate their successful rivals, and I know by your expressions of dislike for me that you have heard—

RUIZ: Heard what?

FON: That the Spanish government, learning of your dastardly conduct, has granted your former wife a full separation from you and that your beloved Rita is now my wife.

RUIZ: Villain you lie! Coward that you are to thus malign my wife, when I am helpless to defend her! Were I unshackled, you would not dare speak to me of her as you have done.

FON: You are exceptionally gallant in thus defending my wife against her husband. Such chivalry I have never known before. In answer to what you said of me, I will say, I may be a villain, but when you call me coward, you lie!

RUIZ: Prove it! Unlock my chains and let us take it hand to hand for freedom or for death!

FON: You are overwrought, my friend, or you would not attempt to fight me. Probably you have never heard of my wonderful strength. In my hands, you would be but as a mouse in the claws of a sporting kitten.

RUIZ: We will see! Unlock my chains!

FON: Just as you say. But I will first lay aside my weapons, and as I wish to be fair, will offer you my sword and will myself depend entirely upon my muscle (hands him sword).

RUIZ (throwing sword behind him): I want no weapon. Unlock my chain!

FON: All right, my man but you are entering an unequal contest.

You will lose your life.

RUIZ: Better death than such a life.

FON: Yes I'll undo your chain (aside)—the chain that binds you to this life! (Strikes him on head with hilt of discarded sword.)

RUIZ: Treachery, treachery! O, Rita, I die! America, proudest country of the world, avenge this death! (Enter two soldiers)

FON: That blow was well aimed. Bar the door and come here. This little affair is finished now; but there is need of great haste in disposing of his body. I do not wish him found. I will give you orders. Obey, and not one word, on your life! (Noise without. Soldiers cover Ruiz with blanket.)

VIC. Open this door, open this door, or I will break it down! (Beats on door which gives way and precipitates Pat.)

PAT: Faith, an' what have I got into now?

FON: And so it's you, is it? I'll make short work of you! You will take the same route as your master! (raises sword to strike him.)

VIC (enters): Not so fast! Not so fast! If you have any accounts, settle them with the American!

FON (to soldiers): Call the guard!

VIC (to soldiers): Obey, and you are dead men! Fondesveila, what sort of an infant do you take me for, that you think I would enter your prison without first disposing of your guard? Call till you are hoarse; you will receive no response. Your men are all peacefully sleeping. You see I have outwitted you; that is the Senorita and I—She disguised as a fruit and candy vender, passed among your guard and concealed in her sweets, administered to each a sleeping potion. You are outdone, Fondesveila, and I demand the release of your prisoner, Ricardo Ruiz!

FON: He will be of little use to you now; for he is dead. There he lies.

VIC: Yes, he is dead; and you have killed him. I would like to take the law into my own hands and administer justice to you; you villain! (Enter Mercedes and Rita, Biddy and children.)

MER: Our plan worked out very nicely, did it not, Victorian? Fondesveila, you are wonderfully clever, but others are more so. Some one else holds the reins now, and you do not seem to enjoy it.

RITA: Victorian, take me to my husband. I can wait no longer.

VIC: I have been compelled during my life to perform some very sad duties, but never one which tore my heart as does this. But, Rita, you have proven yourself a brave, true woman, and you must endeavor to be so when I tell you to what a severe disappointment you are to be subjected. Your Ricardo is not here to meet you.

RITA: O Victorian, I cannot endure it! The weight of misfortune is too heavy for a weak woman. Tell me, have these wretches taken Ricardo from this prison to one yet more vile? Let me know where it is, and I will follow

FON: Not soon, I trust Rita.

VIC: Not another word, Fondesveila. O, how can I break this news to Rita? Yes, they have released your Ricardo from his prison of clay and he is now beyond all earthly pain or pleasure. He has taken that journey into the unknown, which we must all take sooner or later. All that remains of your beloved and once loving husband, lies there

RITA: Dead! My Ricardo dead! Oh no, Victorian, you must be mistaken—my Ricardo could not die he was so young and strong. Wake, oh, Ricardo, wake; tis thine own Rita calls to thee. Speak to me, Ricardo—thou wert never silent to my pleadings. O, Mercedes, oh Victorian, he will not hear me! Can it be that he is dead? O, children of my life and his; we are sore bereft. Thy hands are cold and do not know thy Rita's press upon them; thy ears are cold and do not hear me; thy lips are cold and do not answer. And this is death? O, cruel, cruel fiend, that tears us from our loved ones! Fondesveila, my Ricardo did not die—he was murdered! Revenge! revenge! The word continues to grow and magnify itself, till all the world is enveloped in that one word—revenge! Revenge, I must and will have! Victorian, there stand my helpless children in their desolation. Pity them. There lies my murdered husband; there stands his murderer. In the name of America, avenge this death. (Sees chair. Examines writing.)

FON: Why do you say I killed your husband? You have no proof.

RITA: No proof? I have no proof, you say? Here in my husband's last message is proof sufficient.

FON: His last message? He sent none.

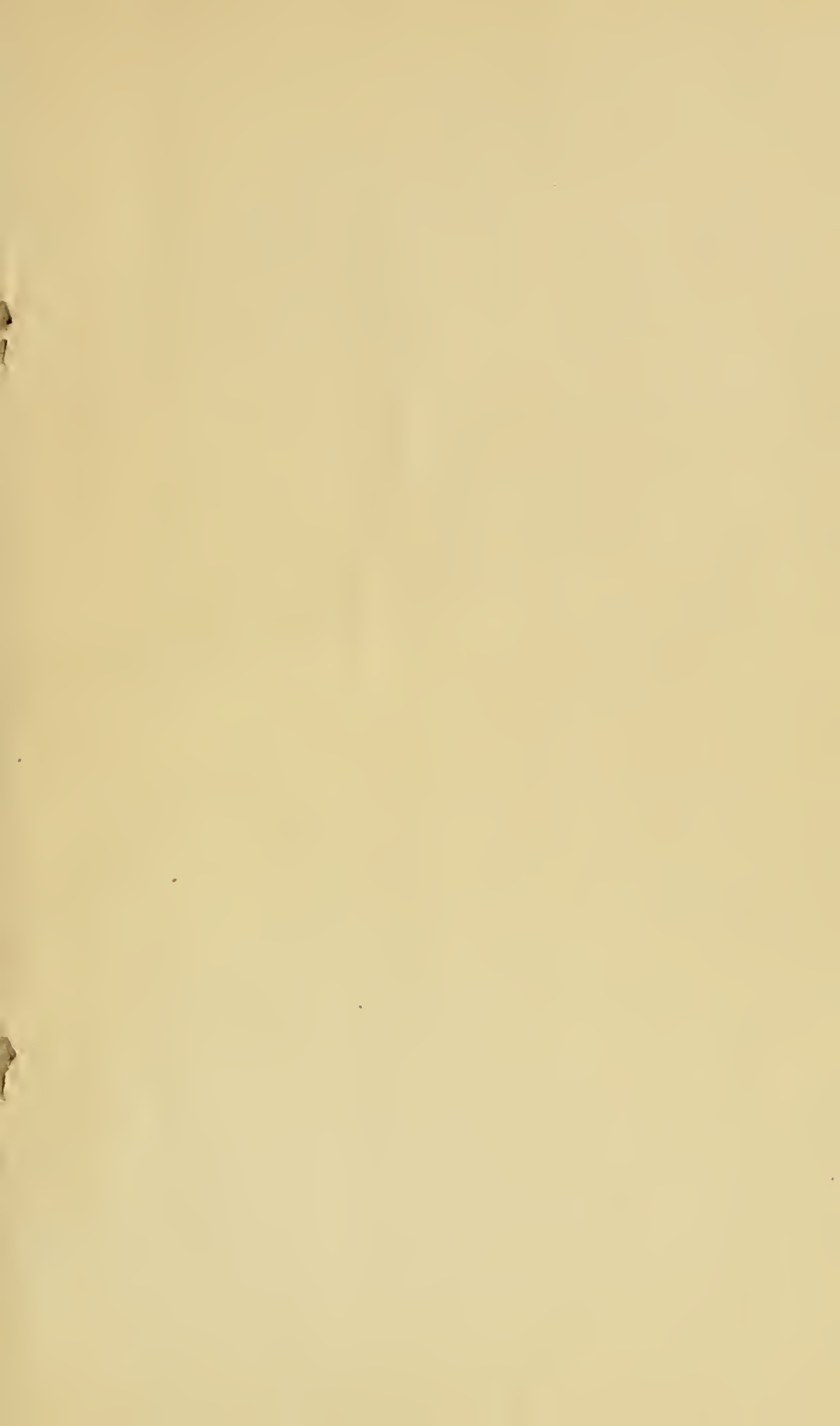
RITA (pointing to chair): Aye but he did—read!

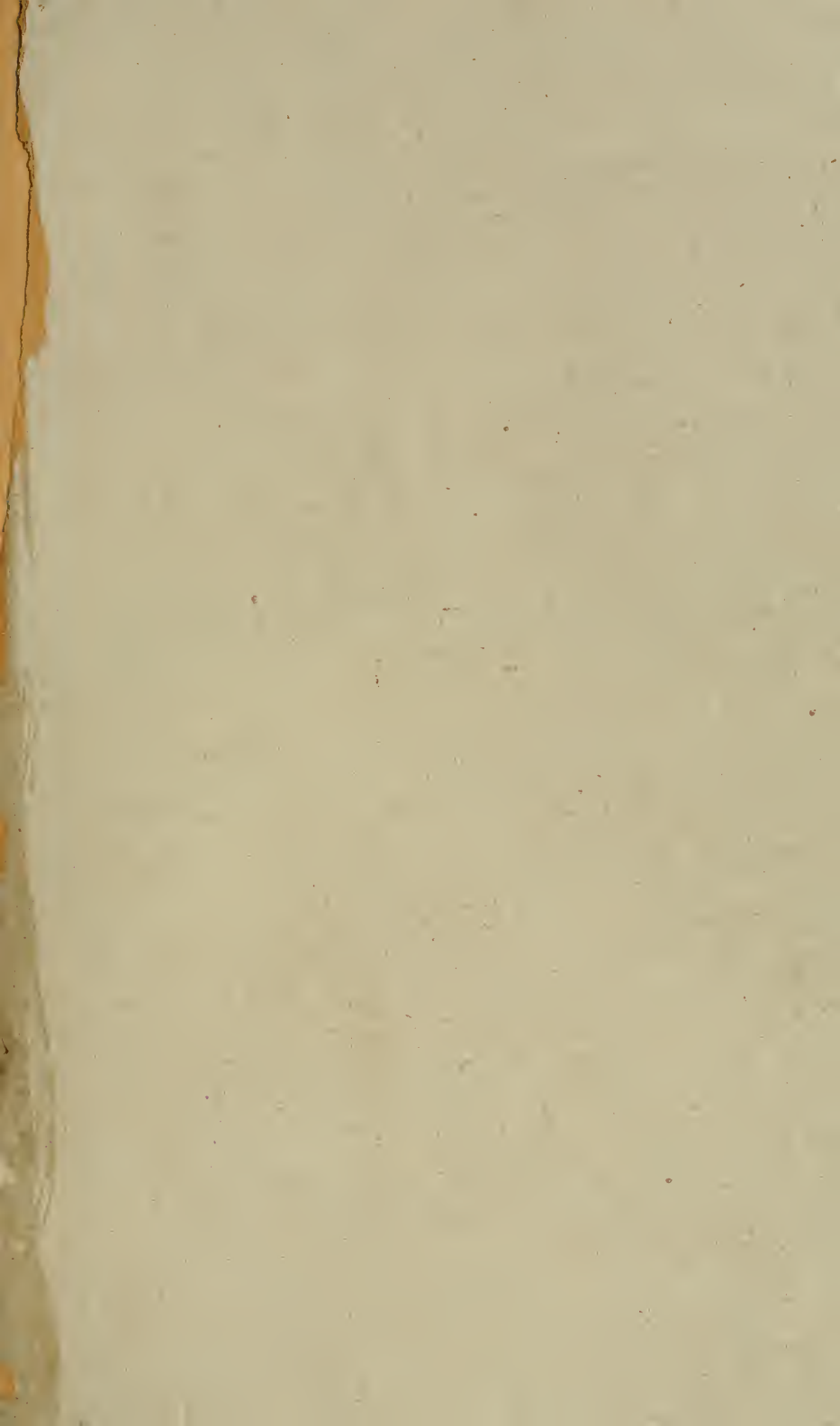
FON (reads): 'Twas but my maddening love that caused my crime. (Kneels) Oh, Rita, have mercy upon him who has loved you to his destruction. Pity, pity! Have you no pity?

RITA: None! The widow of that murdered man is a Spanish woman, and she will take 'A Spaniard's Revenge'! (Takes dagger from her dress and stabs him as he kneels. Fondesveila dies.)

(Curtain.)







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